

Improving the Management of Threats by Applying Novel Risk Assessment and Investigative Tools

The National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) has developed a detailed procedure to conduct improved bomb searches and to manage bomb threats based on applying novel risk assessment and investigative tools. The procedure establishes a method by which threat credibility is assessed and actions taken based on a quantitative score. The method produces an established and consistent means by which to document occurrences and brings a quantitative and objective analysis to a complicated and complex situation. The response is tailored to the hazard based on the information collected. The following benefits were realized in developing the risk assessment and investigative tools:

- Adopted a search priority strategy. The search priorities ensure that the highest risk areas are searched first. Performed prior to evacuation, the methodical search reveals potential explosive hazards that could be set in public and high traffic areas meant to impact employees as they evacuate the site or emergency workers as they set up command posts.
- Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Barbour County Tactical Search and Recovery Team's (BCTSRT) K9 unit. BCTSRT provides the services of a bomb search dog and K9 unit training. Their expertise as searchers and trainers prepares NETL for safe operations during bomb searches.
- Developed a numerical scorecard as a tool for assessing threat credibility. The threat credibility assessment scorecard provides a methodical process of assessing a complex situation. The institution of a scorecard helps ensure that decision makers will consider the most important information – which might otherwise be overlooked in high stress, rapidly developing situations.
- Developed a method for collecting search results to document findings and determine where to concentrate resources. These techniques ensure the most pertinent information reaches decision makers and resources are committed to the highest risk areas.
- Developed a numerical scorecard as a tool for assessing the risk of returning employees to buildings after searches have occurred. NETL decision makers now have a tool to help them assess the safety of returning employees back to work after a bomb threat. Points are awarded for each action taken to ensure that a thorough bomb search was performed.

NETL's management of bomb threat risk is now more effective, structured, and quantitative – leading to better protection of NETL workers and the public and lowered risk and uncertainty levels during a threat situation. Costs are contained through the prevention of injury or death of NETL personnel and reduction in lost work time due to the decreased number of full-scale evacuations in response to low credibility threats.

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